

# ABOUT GROWTH

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*Building Foundations for the Future*

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## The key to smart growth in Chelan County

By Gordon Congdon  
Orchardist and Member,  
Chelan County Planning Commission

In the 1990s, rapid population growth in Wenatchee and East Wenatchee in Chelan and Douglas counties was creating numerous social, economic, and environmental challenges for the area.

New versus old, urban versus rural, environment versus jobs, public versus private, and the role of government in a free society defined the fracture lines. Like many communities in the West, we were suffering growing pains and struggling to find the language, the ideas, and the arena to discuss these challenges.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) had become such a contentious and divisive issue in Chelan County, we sought ways to address growth and development issues in different terms than the GMA. We borrowed the term "smart growth," which many groups around the country had begun to use.

While no single definition of smart growth exists, most smart growth efforts advocate alternatives to sprawling development that reduce automobile use, lead to compact communities, restore urban cores, protect farmland, maintain open space and environmental quality, make efficient use of public infrastructure, and in so doing, keep tax rates low.

Smart growth strategies usually take a regional approach to these issues and frequently call for increased cooperation among local governments in an effort to achieve these goals.

In this milieu, in March 1997, we organized a very successful community forum: "Smart Growth—Planning for Healthy Communities." The forum

capitalized on several independent initiatives aimed at revitalizing the downtown cores of Wenatchee, East Wenatchee, and other cities in the two counties.

The cities of Wenatchee and East Wenatchee, the

Wenatchee Downtown Association, the Port of Chelan County, and Quest for Economic Development had all initiated and supported efforts to revitalize the downtowns of Wenatchee and East Wenatchee in recent years. Downtown revitalization appeared to be one of the topics that the disparate elements of our communities could agree on.

With the backing of local governments and the financial support of local businesses, we raised about \$7,000 to put on the forum. It featured four main presentations: 1) principles of community design; 2) what will our communities look like in 20 years; 3) why downtown revitalization

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Gordon Congdon is a cherry orchardist and member of the Chelan County Planning Commission. He is active in efforts to protect the natural resources of Chelan County. On April 29, he will moderate a meeting in Wenatchee called "Working Together for Salmon, Water, and People." For more information, call 509-663-6678.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WENATCHEE APPLE COMMISSION

## ABOUT GROWTH

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# Smart growth and the GMA

**By Shane Hope**  
 Managing Director, CTED Growth Management Program

**L**ots of people are talking about smart growth. But how is it happening in our state? Does it fit with other things, like the GMA?

In Washington, our growth management laws provide a framework for smart growth to happen. It is up to communities to fill in the rest. This is happening in more and more places across the state.

Smart growth is exactly what the GMA was meant to encourage. In the nine years since the act was passed, people have had to figure out how to work together in new ways across old boundaries. They have tested the limits of "sprawl growth" versus "smart growth" and "loss of critical areas" versus "protection of critical areas." They have found ways to conserve prime farmlands and forests and revitalize downtowns. Sometimes, people have had to hear the growth management hearings boards say, no, that isn't consistent with the law.

The hard work is starting to pay off. Most of the state's population live in a place where the local government is putting an adopted 20-year growth plan into action. Coalitions for livable communities and smart growth are burgeoning. Development is being linked with having adequate roads, water, and other infrastructure available. A Buildable Lands Program has started for more than 100 local governments to measure their success in managing growth.

Other things are happening too. For example, a state program began in 1990, the same year the GMA took effect, to help purchase and develop outdoor recreation and habitat lands. So far, \$209 million in grants has come through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program to do this. Even as Washington remains one of the 10 fastest-growing states in the nation, lands and facilities are

being added for parks, trails, open space, and valuable natural habitats.

Funding for infrastructure has not been forgotten either. Voters in the high-growth Puget Sound region recently approved a new transportation network that will include trains, light rail, buses, and HOV lanes. More money is going to repair and replace the old infrastructure too. For example, the state's Public Works Trust Fund will provide \$108 million of low-interest revolving loans this year alone and more in each year to come.

Of course, the work is not done. Our two greatest challenges are first, to continue the momentum for growth management, and second, to find the money and will to reward communities and developers that are making smart growth choices.

In the long run, smart growth has benefits over sprawl. It will save us money. It will help ensure clean air and water. It will revitalize our existing urban areas and allow people in rural places to maintain a rural lifestyle. Smart growth allows us to leave a legacy for our grandchildren that is far richer than unplanned sprawl.

With a growth management law now nine years old, this is a good time to look at our progress. The evidence is coming in: Smart growth has made its debut in Washington, and it is helping communities reach their GMA goals.

## Date set for housing conference

This year's Affordable Housing Conference, presented by CTED and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, is scheduled October 31 to November 3 at the DoubleTree Inn in Sea-Tac.

Speakers from throughout the nation and region will share ideas and perspectives.

Mark your calendar now so you'll be sure to be able to attend.

# Strong smart growth effort blossoming in Clark County

By Mick Weltman

Executive Director, Friends of Clark County

Clark County adds 31 new neighbors daily bringing more subdivisions, increased traffic, and reduced farmland and wetlands. Clark County's growth, the fastest in the state of Washington, is an issue on the minds of many county residents.

Starting in the spring of 1996, several environmental activists and neighborhood leaders, with technical assistance from 1000 Friends of Washington in Seattle and the Audubon Society of Portland, organized the Friends of Clark County. Our mission is to conserve and protect



PHOTO / LAUREN BRADEN

Southwest Washington's livability and quality of life. The goal of Friends of Clark County is to build local support for thoughtful land use planning with an eye on our ability to set an example

statewide on how to preserve the health of the environment.

Friends has two major thrusts. One is educating the public. Clark County has a 20-year comprehensive growth management plan that residents know very little about. We educate people about growth management issues. This includes looking at what other communities are doing and exploring alternative patterns for development.

Another effort is encouraging citizens to get more involved to advocate for building a better quality of life in the community.

Last year, we incorporated the smart growth concept into our organization. Smart growth is both a philosophy and a series of practical measures to build communities of quality. Starting with the question of what makes a livable community, smart growth answers that people are the focus. With building communities for people as its central organizing principle, smart growth creates healthy, vibrant, attractive communities.

While Clark County's 20-Year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan serves as a good framework for managing growth, more refinement is needed. Smart growth provides the soul and the spirit of what we believe creates good community development.

Last year, we offered a series of forums to educate citizens on growth management related issues. More than 450 people attended the forums.

This year we are continuing to offer forums, and more than 110 people attended a recent forum.

We also provide a quarterly newsletter and briefing papers. And, we expanded our website, <http://www.teleport.com/~focc/> to serve as a resource center for smart growth in the community.

## The key to smart growth in Chelan County

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makes dollars and sense; and 4) conflict or cooperation—community values in a rapidly changing world.

The smart growth forum was a great success. The local newspaper wrote that it "was a time for renewal" and urged the organizers to continue the dialogue. Encouraged by the enthusiastic support, two other forums followed: "Smart Growth II—Lands and Resources: Balancing Public Goals and Private Rights" and "Working Together for the 21st Century."

The Working Together forum identified images of a preferred future which included compact communities, efficient transportation, affordable housing, economic development, clean air, water, and open space, efficient infrastructure, good educational facilities, and cooperation among local jurisdictions. These concepts commonly form the backbone of smart growth strategies and closely resemble the original 13 goals of the GMA.

The irony is that in Chelan County, which so vigorously resisted the GMA, many people endorse the principles of the act. The difference, of course, is how the principles are arrived at.

If the community sees these principles as only forced on them by government, they reject them. If given the chance to develop them on their own and consider them on their merits, they readily embrace the same concepts. Therefore, the key to implementing smart growth principles, the GMA, or any other public policy is to get citizen understanding and support.

To that end, the smart growth forums and other educational efforts in Chelan County have worked to engage the citizenry in thoughtful discussions about planning and community development. This is the key to smart growth and good government.



# King County using smart growth concepts to help manage growth



**By Ron Sims**  
King County Executive

I believe the GMA's policies are an extremely important foundation on which to control sprawl, protect our environment, and encourage vibrant urban and suburban cities. While growth management is working well overall in King County, unexpectedly strong growth rates in recent years have created demanding challenges.

In June of 1998, I introduced my SmartGrowth Initiative to the agencies of King County to encourage creative

approaches to implementing our comprehensive plan to better manage the faster-paced growth. By continuing to address growth comprehensively, King County's SmartGrowth Initiative will balance: 1) an improved transportation system; 2) adequate affordable housing; and 3) the promotion of livable communities with protection of King County's rich environmental resources and rural areas.

Growth management is working in King County. State and county growth management policies and regulations are demonstrating success in containing much of the newest development within cities and the designated urban growth area (UGA).



From 1994 to 1997, 91 percent of new household growth occurred within the UGA. In rural King County, development has decreased from 15 percent of overall development in the late 1980s to just 9 percent in 1997. As a result, King County's SmartGrowth Initiative is committed to keeping these trends going.

## King County's SmartGrowth Initiative

### Livable communities

Programs promoting affordable, well-designed, compact living areas within walking and bicycling distance of transit, shops, and parks:

- Affordable housing initiatives like our surplus property program
- Open space acquisition
- 101 ballfields

### Linking transportation and land use

Programs to reduce traffic congestion, promote mass transit use, create opportunities for more walking and bicycling, and encourage the development of livable communities:

- Transit-oriented development



- Regional arterial network
- Freight mobility

### Rural legacy

By purchasing wildlife habitat, open spaces, and farmlands, King County remains committed to preserving the region's unique rural character. In addition, King County has taken important steps to remove regulatory loopholes that allow growth to occur at odds with planned densities. King County actively promotes many programs that provide tax incentives to limit development and encourage rural resource uses, such as farming and forestry:

- Rural resources agenda
- Transfer of development credits

### Protecting our environment

King County's regulations for protecting the environment are some of the most stringent in the country. With Chinook salmon now listed as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act, and other valued species dangerously close to joining the list, protecting our rural and urban environments remains a critical concern. Without proper regulatory control, damage to private property, as well as salmon streams, is unavoidable and costly:



- ESA listing response programs
- Waterways 2000
- Brownfields

For more information about King County's SmartGrowth Initiative:

Shaping Tomorrow and corresponding programs, contact King County's Office of Regional Policy and Planning at 206-296-8777. Or visit our web site at <http://www.metrokc.gov/executive/smartgrowth>.

## Citizens' group launches *SmartGrowth* effort

By Sue Adams

*SmartGrowth* Director, Pilchuck Audubon Society

In 1993, the Pilchuck Audubon Society, based in Snohomish County, began its *SmartGrowth* Campaign because citizens thought there needed to be a program that would monitor the implementation of the GMA. Of greatest concern were the parts of the act that protect rural, agricultural, forest, and environmentally sensitive lands and areas.

The founding director of *SmartGrowth*, Ellen Gray, organized citizens to become active in the development of the comprehensive plan. As the process moved forward,

more and more citizens became involved in writing letters, attending and testifying at public hearings, and meeting with elected officials regarding land use issues. *SmartGrowth* became a key player in the growth management process in Snohomish County.

As a result of citizen concern on land use issues, *SmartGrowth* membership has increased by at least 20 percent each year. *SmartGrowth* works with citizens to stem the consequences of irresponsible growth and development and to ensure that sensitive areas and wildlife habitat maintain a high profile in the growth management debate.

Our program connects neighbor-

hood groups in a county-wide coalition of citizens groups that meets monthly to share information concerning land use issues. We have a program that educates, empowers, and supports citizens in their efforts to protect our quality of life.

The GMA is our most valuable tool for success in protecting our quality of life. The goals provide the framework for our efforts to affect well-planned and responsible growth in our county and the cities within its boundaries. It is a piece of public policy that allows for early and continuous public participation in the land use process.

Together as a community, we use the GMA to protect our quality of life in Snohomish County.



# Vice President Al Gore lauds community livability efforts

**F**rom the desert Southwest to the forested Northeast, from the most pristine snowfields in Alaska, to the loveliest hollows of the Carolinas—thickets of strip development distort the landscape our grandparents remember. We walk through the hearts of the cities, but so often the downtown is a wasteland of boarded-up storefronts that goes silent at night, as commuters start their grueling commute to further and further periphery suburbs.

The problem which we suffer in too many of our cities, suburbs, and rural areas is made up of so many different pieces that until recently it has been a problem that lacked a name. “Sprawl” hardly does justice to it.

But Americans are resourceful people. While the blight of poor development and its social consequences have many names, the solutions, pioneered by local citizens, are starting to coalesce into a movement. Some call it “sustainability”; some call it “smart growth”; others refer to “metro-politan strategies”; still others prefer to talk about “regionalism.” In New York and Portland, in towns like Celebration in Florida and in other areas nationwide, its been called the movement for “livability.” And that’s as good a word as any to describe the many solutions that local citizens are crafting.

The movement across the country is showing us how we can build more livable communities—places where families work, learn, and worship together—where they can walk and bike and shop and play together—or choose to drive—and actually find a parking place!—and get out and have fun.

So many towns and suburbs are building more livable communities and showing that you can embrace community development while growing stronger

economically in the process. Indeed, first and foremost, our cities, suburbs, and neighborhoods need continued economic growth and strength to thrive.

That is why our efforts to make communities more livable today must emphasize the right kind of growth—sustainable growth. Promoting a better quality of life for our families need never come at the expense of economic growth. Indeed, in the 21st Century, it can and must be an engine for economic growth.

PHOTO / WILLIAM P. WRIGHT



**Vice President Al Gore, at a recent meeting of the Puget Sound Regional Council's General Assembly in Shoreline, Washington, conducts a conversation about livability in the region.**

Fortunately, all across America, communities are coming together to meet these new challenges of growth—to restore historic neighborhoods, to protect centuries-old farmland, to turn shopping malls into village squares, to preserve both our natural and our cultural heritage. These communities are proving that Americans can grow according to its values—which include goodness, but also include beauty. By working together, they show us we can build an America that is not just better off, but better.

What is being gained is not just livability, but new life for our democracy.

This article contains excerpts from a speech made by Vice President Al Gore at The Brookings Institute, September 2, 1998.

# States respond to development pressures with smart growth

By Mark Braza

Policy Analyst, Urban and Economic Development Division, Environmental Protection Agency

American metropolitan areas occupy more than twice as much land today as in 1950. More and more states are realizing that suburban sprawl damages the environment and burdens taxpayers with costly infrastructure expansion.

America loses a million acres of farmland<sup>1</sup> and 500,000 acres of forest<sup>2</sup> to development each year while thousands of downtown sites remain vacant. Escalating auto use threatens to reverse the air quality improvements gained through more than 25 years of gasoline and tailpipe emission controls. Meanwhile, the growing expanse of paved surfaces degrades our watersheds with polluted stormwater runoff.

In response, many states have chosen to protect open space and to promote infill development. In the November elections, voters approved \$7.5 billion in land conservation spending in 174 state and local ballot initiatives nationwide. Thirty-three governors from both parties have promoted aspects of smart growth, land conservation, and quality of life improvements in recent inaugural or state-of-the-state addresses.

In Maryland, Governor Parris Glendening (D) has successfully enacted smart growth legislation. The state's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act of 1997 limits most state infrastructure investments to "priority funding areas." These areas are either existing communities or places planned for water lines, sewers, and a minimum density.

Other smart growth provisions include an initiative to purchase conservation easements and development rights on farms and in forests, a property tax credit for brownfields redevelopment, an income

tax credit for businesses that create jobs in priority funding areas, and \$3,000 grants for individuals who move to a home near their workplace.

Last November, New Jersey voters passed a referendum to dedicate \$98 million of the state's sales tax each year for the next 10 years to acquire open space. This program will result in preserving approximately one million acres or half of New Jersey's remaining open space. Governor Christine Todd Whitman (R) has touted the program stating that land conservation benefits tourism and agriculture, reduces municipal infrastructure costs, and attracts corporations to New Jersey.<sup>3</sup>

In Utah, the population is growing at twice the national average and is expected to more than double by 2050. If current development patterns continue, the developed land area will increase four times and will require \$10 billion of new infrastructure. In response, Utah Governor Michael O. Leavitt (R) signed the Utah Quality Growth Act in March. The act establishes the Quality Growth Commission to advise the legislature on growth management issues, administer the Critical Land Conservation Fund capped at \$6 million per year, and provide grants to local governments for the development of quality growth initiatives.

And the list of states supporting smart growth continues. Florida spends \$300 million each year to preserve open space, Tennessee's 1998 growth management legislation mandates the designation of municipal growth areas, and Oregon's Land Use Planning Act has required urban growth boundaries for over 25 years.

Fifty years of sprawling development has taught many states that the next 50 years will require better development patterns.

<sup>1</sup> The American Farmland Trust.

<sup>2</sup> David Bollier. *How Smart Growth Can Stop Sprawl*.

<sup>3</sup> Land Trust Alliance report.

## Smart growth and the Smart Growth Network

By the Urban and Economic Development Division of EPA

Current development patterns are characterized by low-density, single and separate land uses, increasing land consumption, abandonment of center cities and older suburbs, and increased dependence upon the automobile.

Continuing increases in vehicle miles traveled erode air quality improvements. Added roads and parking lots increase the volume of contaminated stormwater runoff and reduce groundwater recharge. And the subsidies that favor suburban development leave abandoned brownfields to languish while farms and habitat are converted to subdivisions and malls.

The Smart Growth Network, a voluntary partnership program coordinated by the Urban and Economic Development Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, addresses these concerns. Its mission is to create metropolitan development that serves the economy, community, and environment. To accomplish this mission, its partners have developed a set of principles that help define smart growth.

- Mix land uses.
- Take advantage of compact building design.
- Create housing opportunities and choices.
- Create walkable neighborhoods.
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
- Provide a variety of transportation choices.
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
- Encourage citizen and stakeholder participation in development decisions.

No single stakeholder can implement smart growth. Therefore, the Smart Growth Network partners work with all sectors to determine how better development patterns and practices can be achieved.

For more information, visit [www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org)

# Smart growth—Defining a new Cascadia Pacific ‘Heartland’ region

By Robert Tibbs

Member, Board of Directors, Cascadia Pacific Center

A new sub-region is fast emerging at the heart of the Northwest’s “Cascadia.” Its future is important as a model of balance between economic growth, a healthy, enlightened society, and the natural environment.

*“The Georgia Basin-Puget Sound Bioregion is an extraordinarily attractive area and its natural beauty and strategic location have made it one of the fastest growing urban regions on the continent.*

*“Indeed the region is rapidly merging into a single mega-city with consequent pressures on a common land, air and marine environment bisected by an international boundary.*

*“Given the dramatic growth pressures on the bioregion, special cooperative efforts are needed to preserve the quality of life of the area, including opportunities for employment, housing and recreation...”*

— Alan F.J. Artibise, International Georgia Basin, Puget Sound Sustainable Urbanization Project

“Smart growth” is vital for heartland communities of the Fraser, Nooksack, and Skagit valleys region between and bordering the urban areas of Greater Vancouver and Seattle.

Here, some 500,000 citizens face a variety of pressing challenges, problems, and opportunities. These demand new levels of leadership and teamwork within and between communities; to contain urban encroachment and sprawl, to mitigate problems of rapid change, and in adapting to a new, central role within the metro-region around them.

The Cascadia Pacific Center is a Bellingham-based, independent, non-profit corporation for citizenship development and governance support. It has taken smart growth as its uniting theme for a new era of collaborative regional action and for promoting harmonious development, which builds on the foundation of legislated growth management.

A range of associated programs focus on sustainable development, improving and integrating communication systems, and enhancing the role and effectiveness of citizens in

governance. These are aimed at complementing and reinforcing existing processes and organizations by building new alliances, inspiring fresh thinking, seeking out new ideas, and tapping new resources.

Partners in the project include the city of Bellingham, Whatcom County, and Western Washington University. Private sector advisors and supporters include Battelle Memorial Institute, GTE Northwest, AT&T/TCI, and David Evans & Associates as well as a large number of individuals; community leaders who bring a unique range of experience and expertise to the project.

Brookings Institute’s Metropolitan Initiative Director, Bruce Katz, will address the next public conference scheduled April 29 in Bellingham. For details call 360-676-6850 or e-mail: rtibbs@cob.org.



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